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DEPARTMENT FOR SRAP, SCA/FO, SCA/A, EUR/RPM  
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: AFGHAN RECONCILIATION INITIATIVE POSSIBLY BUILDING  
AS COIN SUCCESS HANGS IN THE BALANCE IN KAPISA

REF: KABUL 751

Classified By: PRT and Sub-National Governance Counselor Valerie C. Fowler for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary. The Afghanistan Peace and Reconciliation Commission (APRC) has been engaged in reconciliation discussions with Taliban elements following a combined Coalition Force (CF) and Afghan National Army (ANA) operation to regain control of the Alasay Valley in Kapisa Province. At the same time, cease fire discussions have been on-going in the area via multiple shuras, to include a unique proposal from village elders that they would guarantee that insurgents would turn their weapons over to the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF). Public support for Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) efforts, though, will largely depend on whether the ANSF remains in Alasay to provide adequate security to move the area from a &clear8 phase to a &hold8 phase, thereby building sufficient public confidence in GIROA actions. End Summary.

#### Reconciliation Efforts Underway

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12. (C) A representative of the APRC, former Taliban members, and Alasay District Administrator Mullah Fazullah made sufficient progress during reconciliation talks in late March that the Ministry of Defense (MOD), Ministry of Interior (MOI), and President Karzai gave the green light to continue the talks. As many as 50 fighters are involved in the talks, most of them local Pashai tribesmen, but representatives of Taliban commander Sultan Ali also are participating. The talks began March 24, when Fazullah made initial contacts through village mullahs and held a shura with elders from the valley in neighboring Tagab (a meeting confirmed by Governor Abu Bakar during his encounter with French Special Envoy Lellouche) (reftel). A subgroup then shuttled to Kabul to discuss unspecified conditions demanded by Taliban leaders. On March 28, Fazullah informed the ANSF that he was heading back to Alasay with the intent of returning to Kabul on April 4 with a delegation prepared to complete reconciliation.

13. (C) Even as the talks are on-going, multiple shuras with the governor and other local officials have been taking place in and around Alasay for the past two weeks. On March 21, elders from the main villages of Sultankhel, Darwali, and Alasay presented a highly unusual cease fire proposal in which they offered to guarantee that insurgents would turn their weapons over to the ANSF; if they did not, combat operations could recommence on March 26 in the valleys that rise to the east and are still under insurgent control. Neither French Task Force Tiger nor the ANA signed the agreement, although fighting had already essentially ended in the valley proper, and military forces were busy consolidating their positions and completing construction of

two combat outposts.

¶4. (C) These initiatives come in the wake of the actions earlier in March by Coalition Forces to secure the lower Alasay Valley -- a high-value location in southern Kapisa that connects three other adjoining valleys as well as Laghman Province to the east, and provides a key access corridor to Kabul's Northern Gate. The valley is heavily populated with members of the wary and highly-independent Pashai tribe. There are Taliban and Hezb-i-Islami Gulbuddin (HIG) fighters among them, but the people are considered by and large to be fence-sitters willing to ally with whichever side demonstrates the most power. Since the ANA abandoned Alasay over one year ago, the Taliban have maintained control.

#### ANSF Struggle to Man the Valley

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¶5. (C) The Taliban have reinforced their fighters in the adjacent Shkein and Sphey Valleys, and fighting is likely to resume, but the Taliban fighters have chosen not to counter-attack while the ANA and TF Tiger are present in force. The district center is functioning under a newly-appointed district administrator; PRT Kapisa and the French civil-military unit (CIMIC) have been conducting humanitarian assistance operations; and the PRT has begun surveying possible quick impact and other projects.

¶6. (C) A key factor in moving the operation from a clear phase to a hold phase will depend on whether the ANA will remain and the ANP will reinforce its presence, thereby

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maintaining public confidence in the GIROA support to the community. ANA 3/201 brigade Commander BG Ezmari has committed to manning the two platoon-size combat outposts (COPS) for at least 18 months, but he faces some resistance to this plan from corps commander General Wardak and others in MOD. Similar difficulties have cropped up with ANP; for example, only 14 police officers were present when troops arrived in the Alasay District Center on March 14, and survival arrangements with the Taliban had compromised the depleted garrison. At present, reinforcements come from neighboring Tagab District and prospects are uncertain for a temporary ANCOF deployment and permanent reinforcement, although both have been requested through multiple channels, including ISAF, on an urgent basis.

#### Comment

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¶7. (S/NF) It is impossible to judge the prospects for serious reconciliation at this point, although the alleged high-level GIROA attention is of interest in itself. Local men who grabbed their weapons and headed to the mountains when the operation began may now see better prospects in siding with GIROA, but it is hard to credit Sultan Ali, a senior and long-surviving enemy commander who is currently number three on the RC-E targeting list, with an authentic desire to reconcile. What is certain is that counterinsurgency success clearly depends on action to sustain ANSF presence in Alasay. This also means that now is the moment--while 100 shuras bloom--to capitalize politically on the impact of the military operation. As stabilization proceeds on the security and governance sides, we will continue to follow developments on the reconciliation effort as closely as possible.

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